

Social Security at 75 years

July 17, 2010

Dear Members of the Committee on Ways and Means,

I urge Congress to take immediate action to pass the Social Security Fairness Act (L.R. 235/S, 484), which would repeal the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Act.

As a retired elementary school teacher, I am unable to collect any Social Security from my former husband that I would be entitled to if I had been employed in a profession other than teaching. When we divorced, he was able to receive a large payout from me as his share of my projected retirement earnings, and I was expected to get a portion of the Social Security he had contributed during our lengthy marriage.

When I retired, I was informed that I am unable to collect Social Security through his earnings. It is very costly to live in California where my family has resided for many generations. If a family contributes to the Social Security System, it should be entitled to withdraw from that system.

My cousin contributed to Social Security for twenty years, until an automobile accident disabled her and forced her to give up her job. After many years of schooling, she became a teacher for children with disabilities. To her great dismay, her teaching retirement will be inadequate, and she won't be able to benefit from her twenty years in business. She is appalled that she can't collect from the system that she contributed to for so many years. There are five other members of my family that will face this same situation.

Please repeal the GPO and WEP as part of any reform package. Public employees like educators, police officers, and firefighters should not suffer a penalty for dedicating their lives to public services.

Sincerely,
Lynn Haywood
CA